



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 43

February Session, 2018

House Bill No. 5317

House of Representatives, March 26, 2018

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs reported through REP. HENNESSY of the 127th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL VETERANS' REPRESENTATIVES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (b) of section 27-135 of the 2018 supplement to
2 the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
3 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2018*):

4 (b) (1) Any city or town that has not established its own local
5 veterans' advisory committee separate from one or more other cities or
6 towns pursuant to subsection (a) of this section and does not otherwise
7 provide funding for a veterans' service officer shall designate (A) a city
8 or town employee, or (B) a volunteer who is a resident of such city or
9 town, and (i) is a veteran, as defined in subsection (a) of section 27-103,
10 or (ii) has practical experience handling veterans' issues, to serve as a
11 [veterans' service contact person] municipal veterans' representative in
12 such city or town. The Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall
13 annually send to the chief executive officer of any such city or town an
14 electronic notification of such chief executive officer's duty to so

15 designate a city or town employee or volunteer in accordance with this
16 subsection. Such chief executive officer shall, not later than thirty days
17 after receipt of such notification, submit to the Office of Advocacy and
18 Assistance, as described in subsection (b) of section 27-102*l*, the name
19 and electronic mail address of the city or town employee or volunteer
20 so designated. As used in this subdivision, "chief executive officer"
21 means the officer described in section 7-193.

22 (2) [Any city or town employee designated as a veterans' service
23 contact person] Each municipal veterans' representative shall carry out
24 the duties described in subsection (a) of this section and shall complete
25 a training course conducted by the Office of Advocacy and Assistance,
26 as described in subdivision (3) of subsection (b) of section 27-102*l*, or
27 attend a training session conducted by the manager of said office, as
28 described in subparagraph (A) of subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of
29 said section. [Each employee so designated prior to July 1, 2016, shall
30 complete such training course prior to January 1, 2017. Each employee
31 so] Each municipal veterans' representative designated on or after July
32 1, 2016, shall complete such training course not later than one year
33 after the date of such designation. Upon completion of such training
34 course, a [veterans' service contact person] municipal veterans'
35 representative may thereafter receive electronically any new or
36 updated training information from the Office of Advocacy and
37 Assistance and shall not be required to complete any other such
38 training course.

39 Sec. 2. Subdivisions (1) to (3), inclusive, of subsection (b) of section
40 27-102*l* of the 2018 supplement to the general statutes are repealed and
41 the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2018*):

42 (b) (1) The commissioner may appoint a manager to administer an
43 Office of Advocacy and Assistance for the aid and benefit of veterans
44 and their spouses, eligible dependents and family members. The office
45 shall have a staff of not less than eight men and women, including six
46 veterans' service officers, and clerical personnel. The manager and
47 veterans' service officers shall be veterans, as defined in subsection (a)

48 of section 27-103, or veterans who were awarded the armed forces
49 expeditionary medal for service by the armed forces.

50 (2) (A) The manager shall develop a training module on assisting
51 and serving women veterans with regard to state or federal services or
52 benefits and identifying and advising such veterans of community or
53 nonprofit programs focused on assisting and serving such veterans.
54 The manager shall hold and provide instruction for an annual training
55 session, in accordance with such module, to each veterans' [services]
56 service officer and any [veterans' service contact person] municipal
57 veterans' representative, as described in subsection (b) of section 27-
58 135, or representative from an Operation Academic Support for
59 Incoming Service Members center at a public institution of higher
60 education in this state.

61 (B) At least one of the veterans' service officers shall be a woman
62 having a demonstrated interest in the concerns of women veterans,
63 who shall be responsible for addressing those concerns, and, effective
64 upon the next opening of a veterans' service officer position occurring
65 on or after July 1, 2010, at least two of the veterans' service officers
66 shall be individuals having bilingual proficiency in English and
67 Spanish, within existing authorized positions. Each veterans' service
68 officer shall (i) successfully complete a course in veterans' benefits not
69 later than one year after commencement of employment, (ii) attend the
70 training session described in subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, and
71 (iii) be assigned to one of the five congressional districts of the state.

72 (3) The office staff shall, at least twice annually, conduct a training
73 course for any [city or town employee designated a veterans' service
74 contact person pursuant to subsection (b) of section 27-135] municipal
75 veterans' representative. The office staff shall include in such training
76 course a summary of state and federal services and benefits, the duties
77 to be carried out by each [veterans' service contact person] municipal
78 veterans' representative, as described in subsection (a) of section 27-
79 135, and any assistance the office staff may provide to any [veterans'
80 service contact person] municipal veterans' representative related to

81 such duties.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2018</i>	27-135(b)
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2018</i>	27-1021(b)(1) to (3)

VA *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 19 \$	FY 20 \$
Various Municipalities	Potential Savings	Minimal	Minimal

Explanation

The bill results in a potential savings, expected to be minimal, to municipalities by allowing them to appoint volunteers, rather than employees, as municipal veterans' service contacts.

Any savings would occur if, for example, such municipalities were currently providing paid leave or mileage reimbursement for an employee to attend required training seminars.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

OLR Bill Analysis**HB 5317****AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL VETERANS' REPRESENTATIVES.****SUMMARY**

Under current law, any city or town that does not have a local veterans' advisory committee (see BACKGROUND) and does not provide funding for a veterans' service officer must designate a city or town employee to serve as a veterans' service contact person. This bill substitutes the term "municipal veterans' representative" for the term "veterans' service contact person," allows volunteers to serve in this position, and subjects them to all the existing training requirements. By law, the Office of Advocacy and Assistance conducts required trainings at least two times per year.

Under the bill, a "volunteer" must (1) be a resident of the city or town and (2) be a veteran or have practical experience handling veterans' issues.

The bill also makes conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2018

BACKGROUND***Veterans' Advisory Committee***

By law, any city or town may establish a local veterans' advisory committee to, among other things:

1. act as the coordinating agency for veterans and their dependents regarding reemployment, education, rehabilitation, and adjustment to peacetime living;
2. cooperate with all national, state, and local government, and

private agencies to secure services and benefits for veterans and their dependents; and

3. encourage and coordinate vocational training services for veterans (CGS § 27-135(a)).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Veterans' Affairs Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 14 Nay 0 (03/14/2018)